



## **Special Olympics**

**Illinois**

**40**  
YEARS

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**Special Olympics Illinois State Headquarters**

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4/25/08

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room TW-A325  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: MB Docket No. 04-233

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Special Olympics Illinois provides year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for over 21,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities by giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, over 25,000 volunteers and the community.

Special Olympics Illinois is primarily a grass-roots program reaching every part of the state which we have divided into 17 local Area programs, each headed by an Area Director and volunteer committee who organize the training, competitions and fundraisers for the local programs. In addition, we have eight state tournaments and several statewide fundraisers. At both the local and state levels, we rely on local radio and TV stations to help us deliver our messages to the public through news, public affairs and promotional programming as well as through their websites. We do not purchase media; our funds are used to run the approximate 175 events throughout the year and manage the Illinois program.

We rely on the broadcast media to help us tell the story of the events and competitions that take place as well as stories of the athletes and how they and their families are impacted by Special Olympics. We also use the broadcast media to help us solicit volunteers and funds to keep the program running. Individual broadcasters often get involved as masters of ceremonies at Special Olympics events and they talk about those events on radio and TV. News crews come out to competitions and run stories during their newscasts. Public service announcements are run on radio and TV stations to support the mission of Special Olympics as well as fundraisers ranging from Polar Plunges to the Ducky Derby to the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Illinois. Through public affairs programming, representatives of Special Olympics, including the athletes themselves, educate the public about what individuals with intellectual disabilities are capable of achieving.

Stations often serve as sponsors of specific events, providing even more on-air exposure than the usual public service announcement rotation. This helps us attract more paying sponsors of our events, which provides more revenue to run the program. It is necessary for us to expand our program in order to accommodate the demand, because there are still many thousands of people with intellectual disabilities in Illinois who could benefit from participation. A Yale University study indicates that Special Olympics athletes do better at home, at work and in the community than a similar group of persons with intellectual disabilities not involved in Special Olympics.

Stations in Illinois have been very cooperative in helping Special Olympics Illinois get their messages out to the audiences in Illinois in the past and we would expect that to continue in the future without further government regulation.

Respectfully,

Barbara DiGuido  
Director of Communications and  
Media Relations  
Special Olympics Illinois